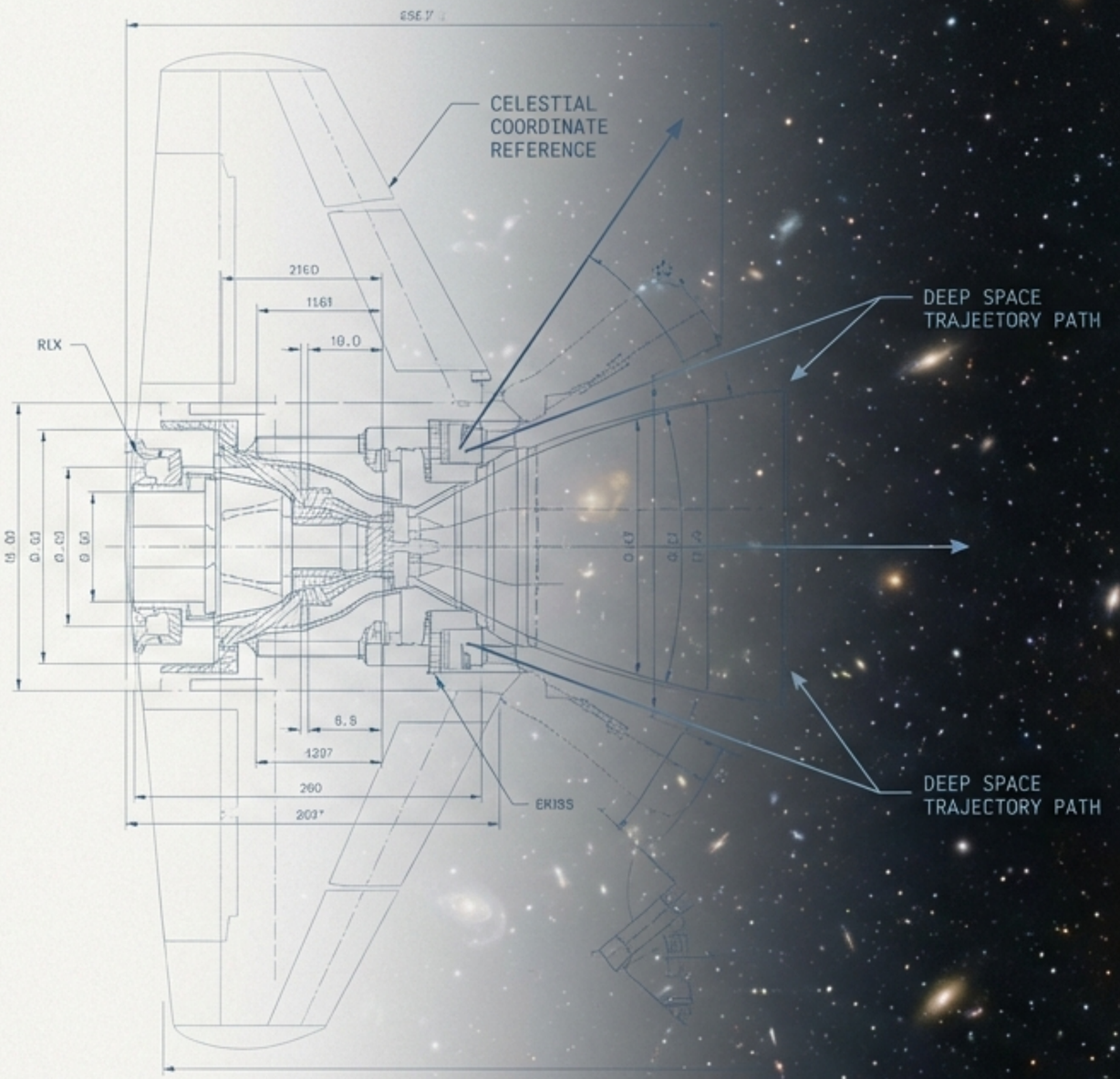
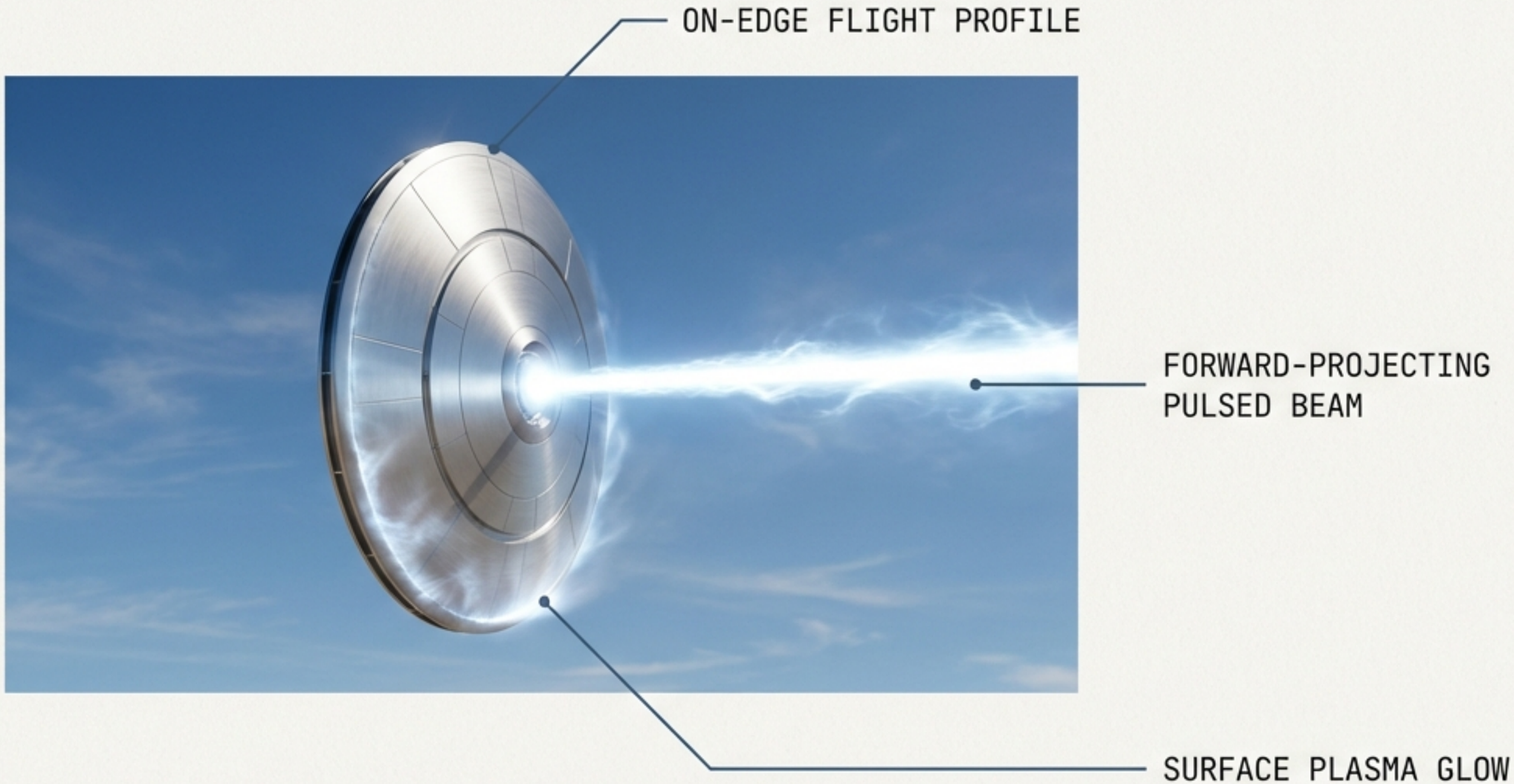
The DEAS Thread: Tracing the Origins of a Revolutionary Propulsion Propulsion Technology

An investigative analysis connecting a 1985 sighting to a 1994 scientific breakthrough.



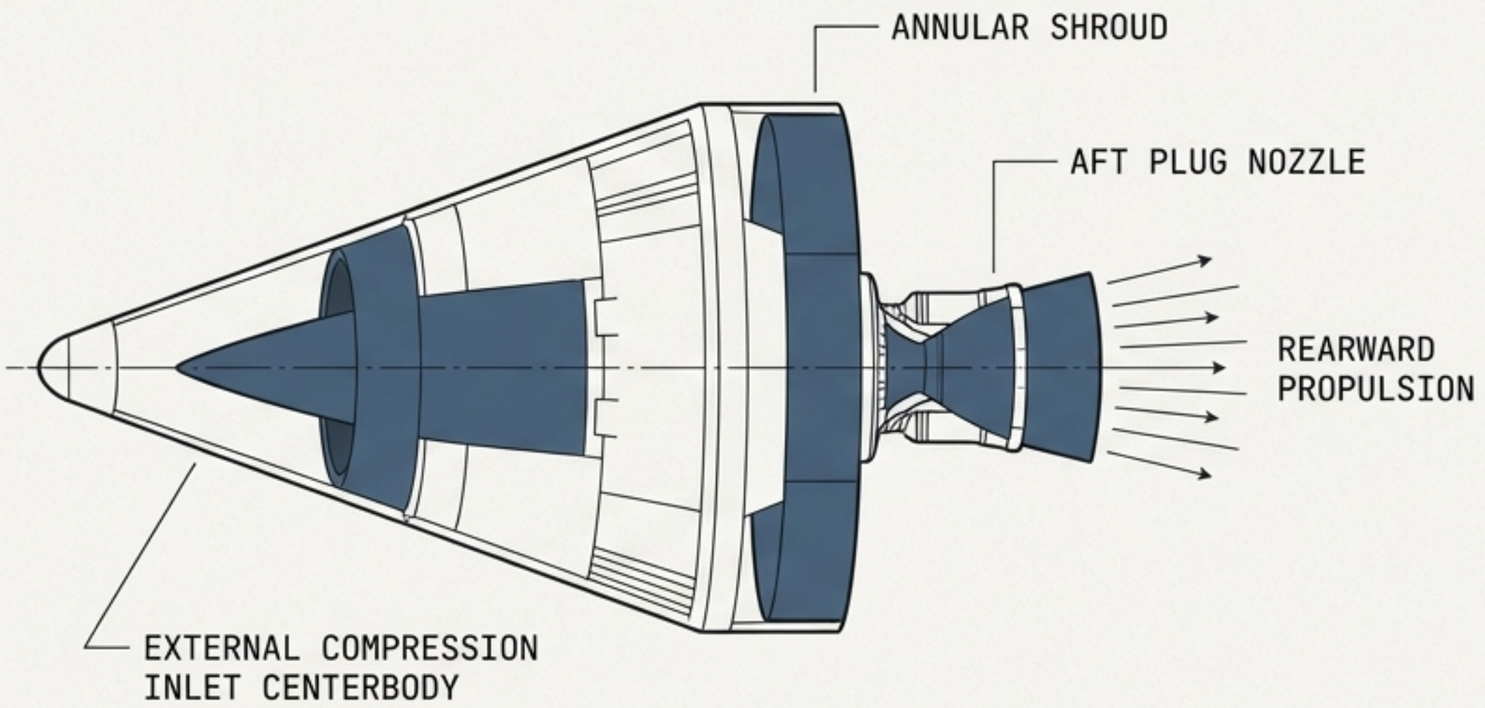
THE ENIGMA OF OCTOBER 5, 1985

ANALYSIS OF THE CORPUS CHRISTI ANOMALY



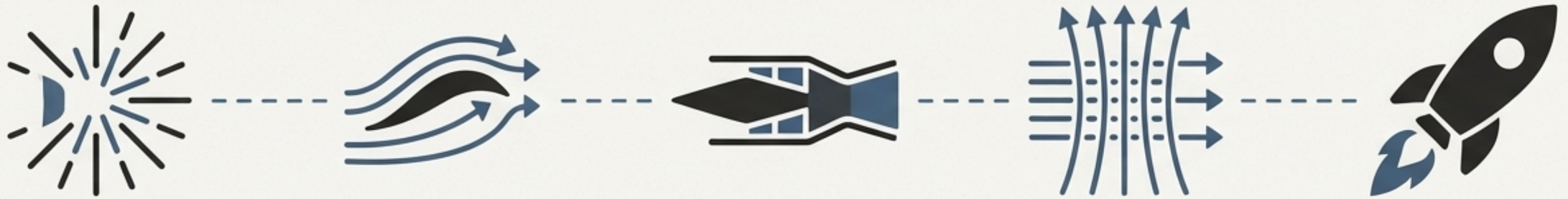
Over Corpus Christi, Texas, a silent, disc-shaped vehicle was captured on 8mm film. Its characteristics appeared to defy all known principles of aerodynamics and propulsion.

THE STATE OF THE ART: 1988



At Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI), Professor Leik N. Myrabo and his students were designing the future of spaceflight: the **"Apollo Lightcraft."** This visionary single-stage-to-orbit concept was to be powered by ground-based lasers beamed to the vehicle's rear.

A Laser-Driven, Combined-Cycle Engine



RDWE Thruster
(Mach 0-1)

Shroud-Lift ERH Thruster
(Mach 1-5)

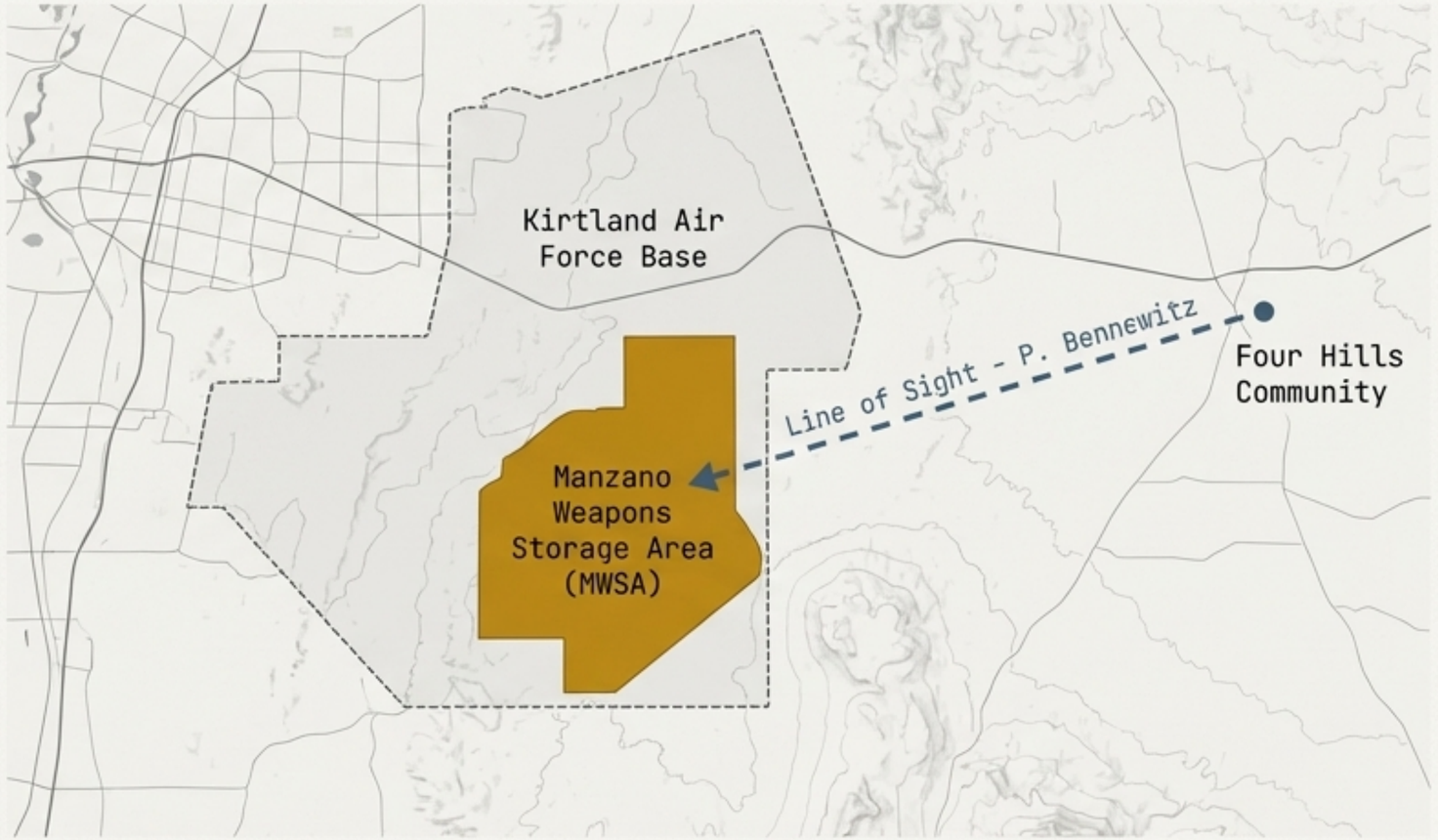
Scramjet
(Mach 5-11)

MHD-Fanjet
(Mach 11-25+)

Rocket
(Orbital Insertion)

The design was a marvel of theoretical engineering, integrating multiple propulsion modes for transatmospheric flight. The vehicle itself was the engine. However, its propulsion was entirely based on energy received and expelled from its aft.

A Precedent in the Shadows: Kirtland AFB, 1979-1980



Years earlier, physicist Paul Bennewitz began filming glowing, disc-shaped objects maneuvering over one of the United States' most sensitive military facilities, home to nuclear weapons storage and advanced research laboratories.

What Bennewitz Filmed

18-foot and 36-foot diameter vehicles

Silent, low-altitude maneuvering

Intense energy burst on departure

Over several nights, Bennewitz documented multiple structured vehicles on still and 8mm film. The objects performed silent, rapid takeoffs, streaking away after hours of low-level activity within the secure perimeter of the base.

An Unprecedented Official Response

ATTENDEES: KIRTLAND AFB BRIEFING, 28 OCT 1980

SUBJECT: P. BENNEWITZ EVIDENCE

TOP SECRET

BG William Brooksher
(AF Office of Security Police)

Maj Thomas A. Cseh
(Base Investigative Detachment)

...and others...

Capt Robert D. Jones
(AFOSI Det 170)

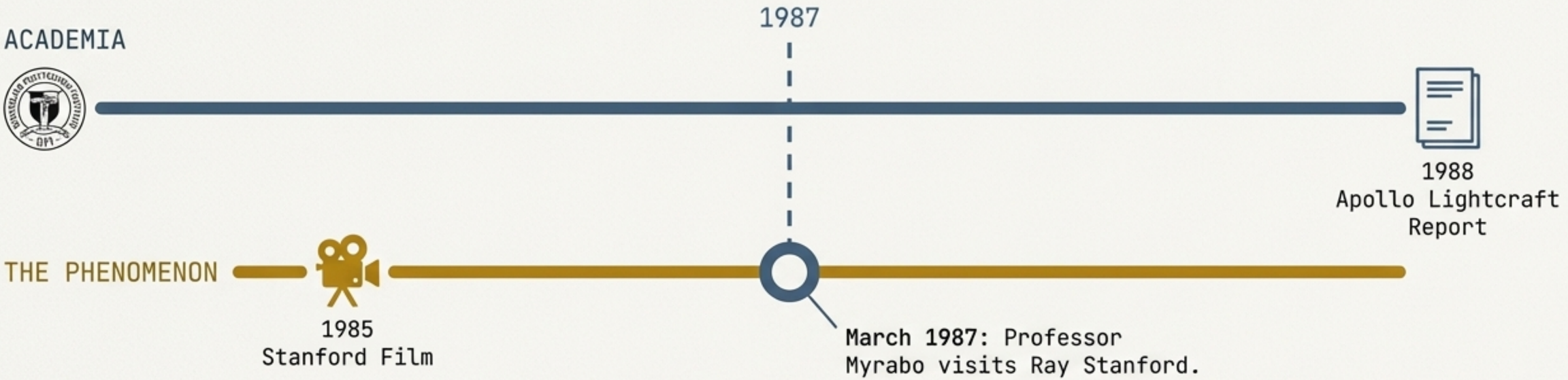
SSgt David J. O'Connor
(AFOSI Det 170)

Dr. Lehmann (Director, Air Force Weapons Laboratory)

Ed Breen (AFWL Instrumentation Specialist)

Contrary to its official public policy, the Air Force took Bennewitz's evidence seriously. A briefing was held at Kirtland, attended by base leadership and, juity Text A, color #212121, they'le for trree notably, the Director of the Air Force Weapons Laboratory (AFWL).

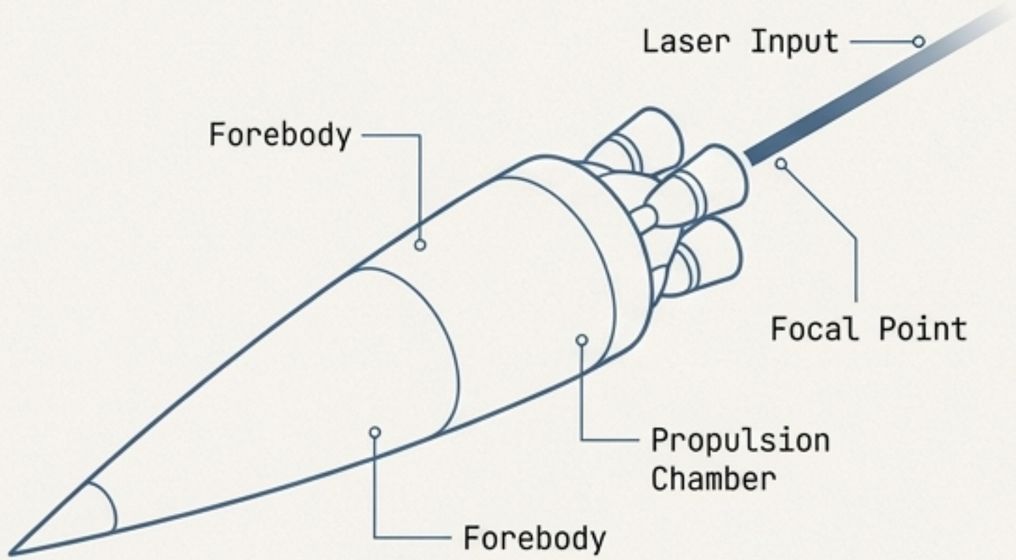
Two Worlds Collide: March 1987



A student at RPI who knew of Stanford's film told Professor Myrabo that seeing it would put him "years ahead" in his research. In March 1987, Myrabo traveled to Maryland and spent several days analyzing Stanford's footage.

A Fundamental Shift in Design

BEFORE: 1988



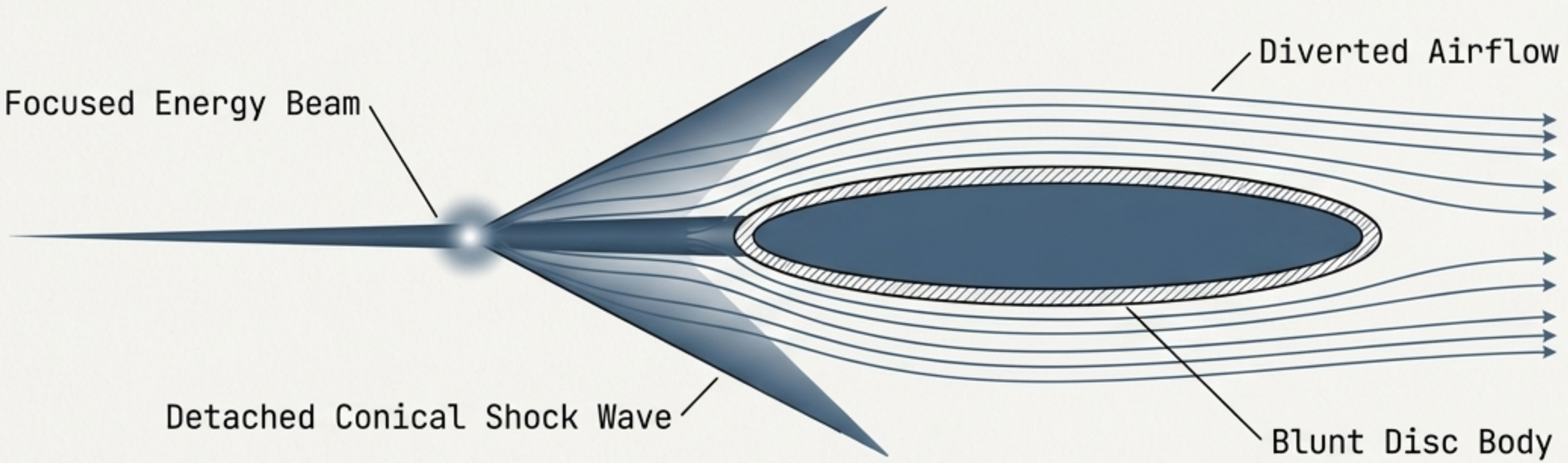
Apollo Lightcraft

AFTER: 1994

Disc Vehicle with Air Spike

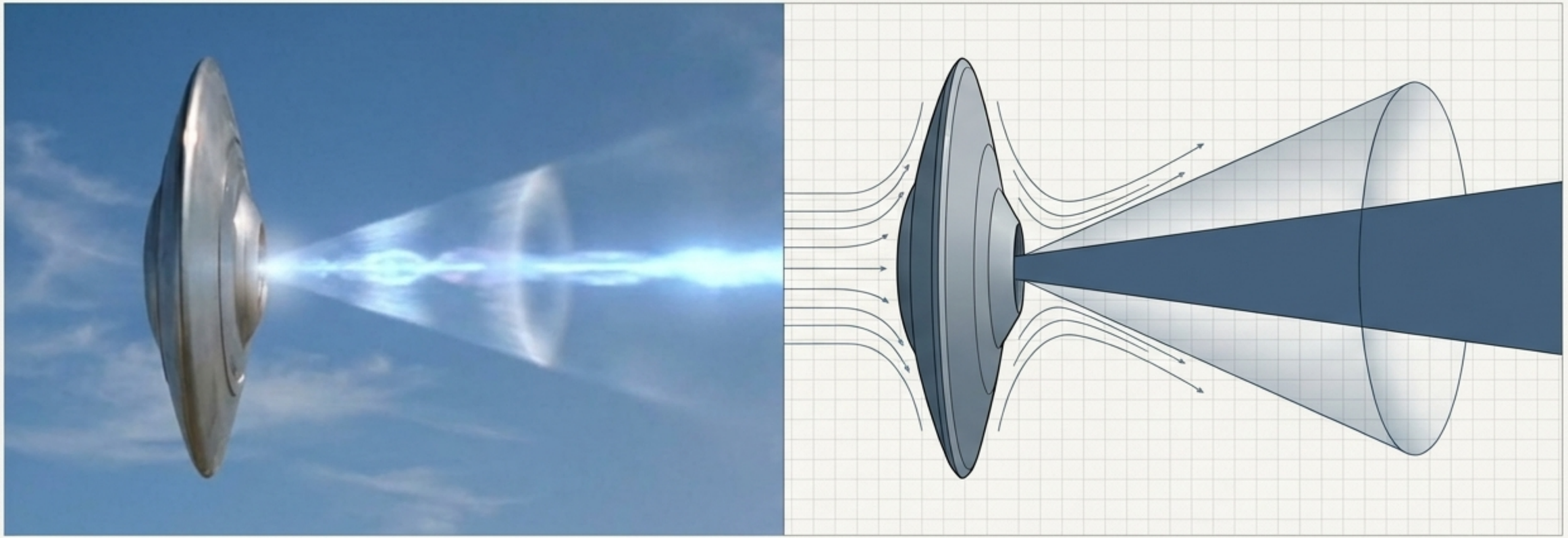
Following his viewing of the 1985 film, Professor Myrabo's publicly presented concepts underwent a radical transformation. The conical, rear-propelled Lightcraft was replaced by a disc-shaped vehicle with a forward-projecting energy beam.

The ‘Directed Energy Air Spike’: A Novel Concept is Born



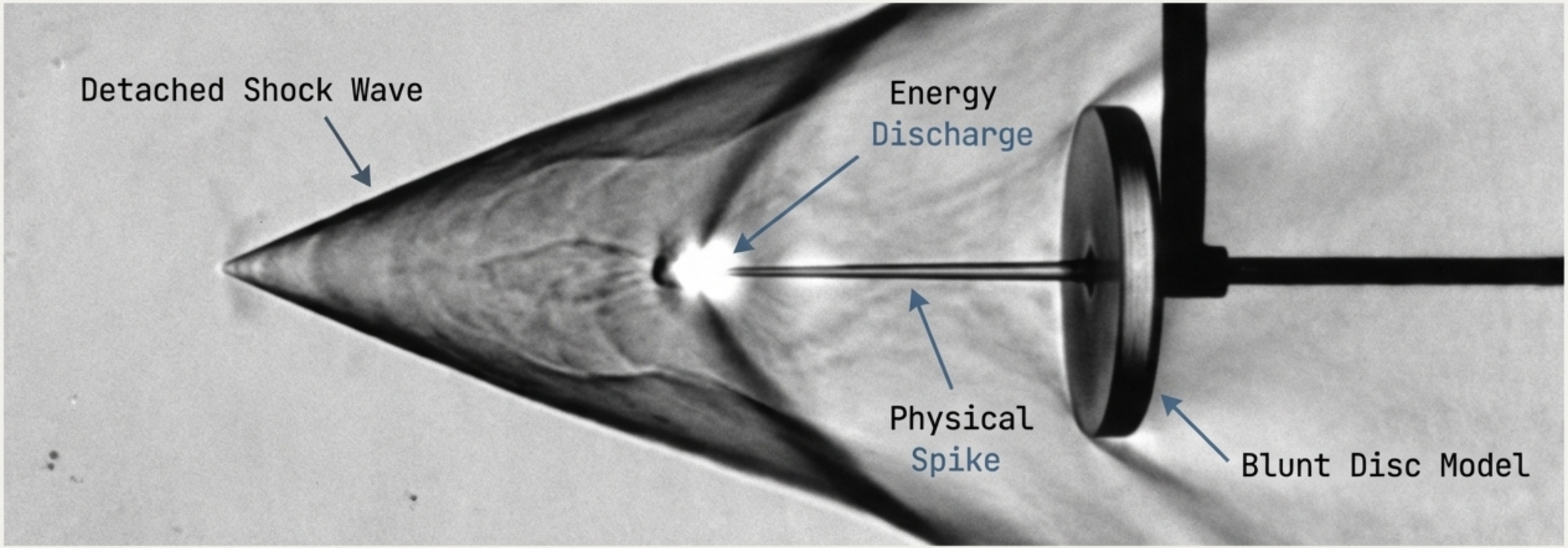
“In a 1994 paper co-authored with Yuri Raizer (AIAA 1994-2451), Myrabo introduced the **‘Directed Energy Air Spike’** (DEAS). He described it as a **‘concept for a novel device’** whose function is to ‘replace the traditional sharp conical forebody normally proposed for streamlining an aerospaceplane.’”

The Unmistakable Parallel



The theoretical concept, introduced to the scientific community nine years after the sighting, was a near-perfect operational match for the technology captured on film.

Breakthrough: The Concept is Validated



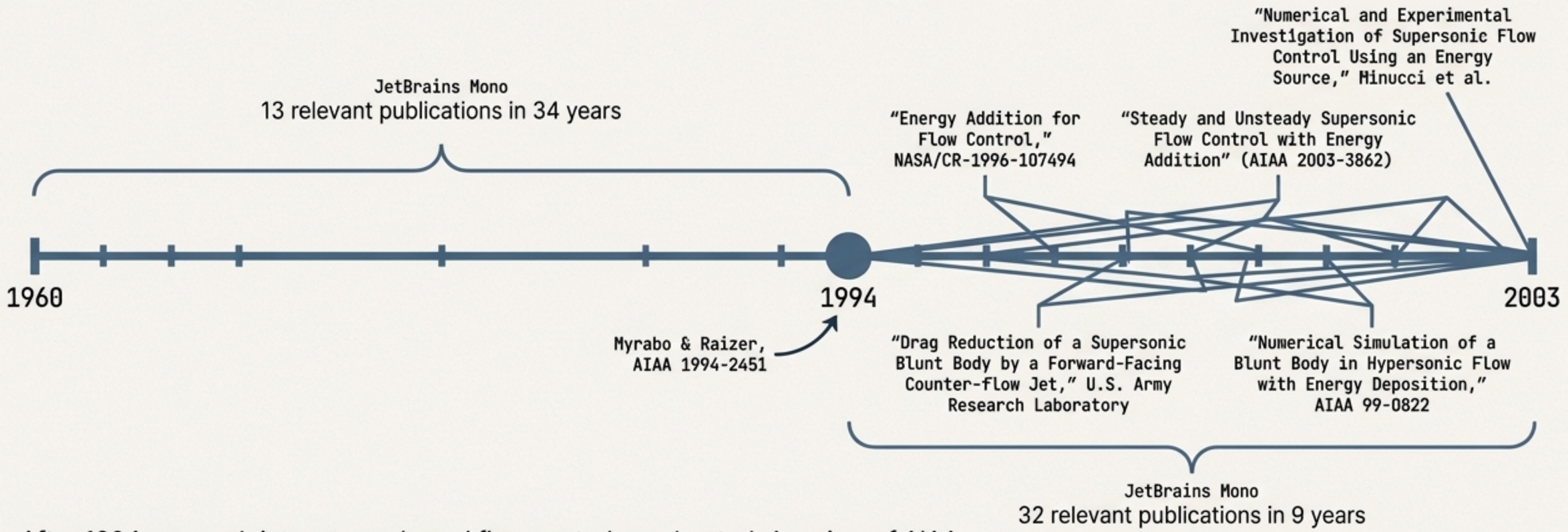
In 1995, an experiment in an RPI hypershock tunnel successfully validated the Air Spike concept. For the first time, energy was used to create an aerodynamic spike, dramatically reducing drag on a blunt body.

A ‘Revolutionary Approach’ to Propulsion

> “In a major breakthrough, Rensselaer graduate students have successfully tested a revolutionary approach to aerospaccraft propulsion that may someday enable vehicles to ride an ‘energy beam highway’ to space.”
>
> — RPI *“Review,”* May 1995

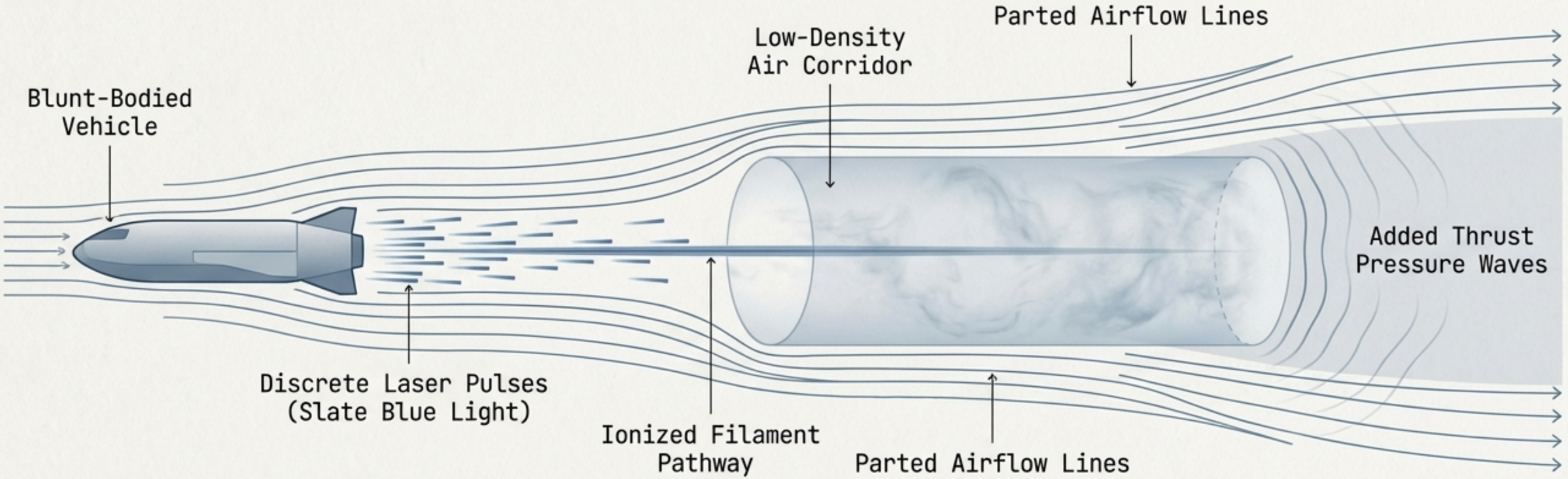
> Dennis Bushnell, Chief Scientist at NASA Langley, described the concept as showing ‘imagination’ but requiring a ‘technology stretch in all areas.”
>
> — *Aviation Week & Space Technology*, May 15, 1995

The Ripple Effect: A New Field of Research Emerges


JetBrains Mono
13 relevant publications in 34 years
1960
1994
2003
Myrabo & Raizer, AIAA 1994-2451
"Energy Addition for Flow Control," NASA/CR-1996-107494
"Steady and Unsteady Supersonic Flow Control with Energy Addition" (AIAA 2003-3862)
"Numerical and Experimental Investigation of Supersonic Flow Control Using an Energy Source," Minucci et al.
"Drag Reduction of a Supersonic Blunt Body by a Forward-Facing Counter-flow Jet," U.S. Army Research Laboratory
"Numerical Simulation of a Blunt Body in Hypersonic Flow with Energy Deposition," AIAA 99-0822
JetBrains Mono
32 relevant publications in 9 years

After 1994, research into energy-based flow control accelerated. A review of AIAA papers shows 32 relevant publications from 1994-2003, compared to just 13 in the preceding 34 years. The concept had opened a new door.

The Concept Refined: Lines of Pulsed Energy

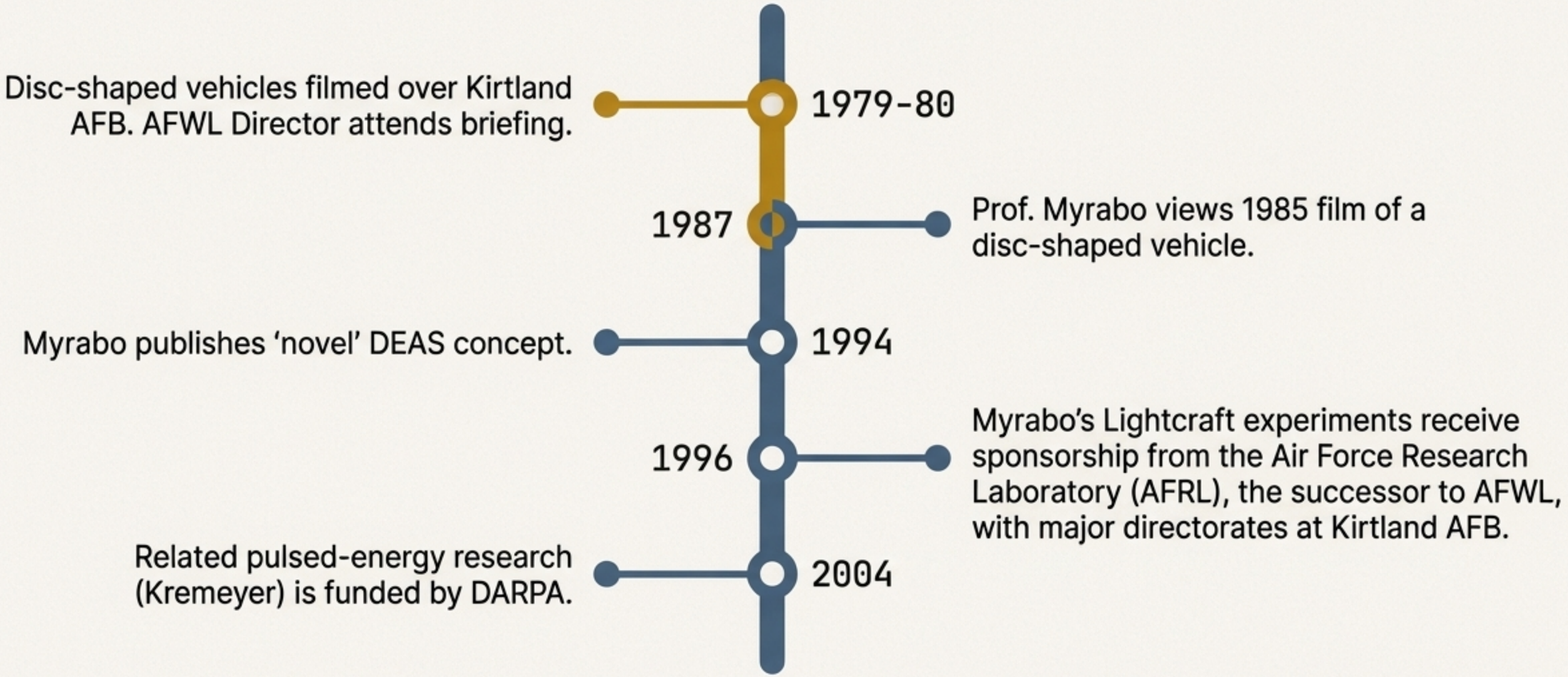


In 2003, researcher Kevin Kremeyer patented a method for creating a low-density air corridor using a filamenting laser to project "lines of pulsed energy." This approach offered substantial drag reduction and even produced added thrust from the pressure wave behind the vehicle.

High-Level Interest and Sponsorship

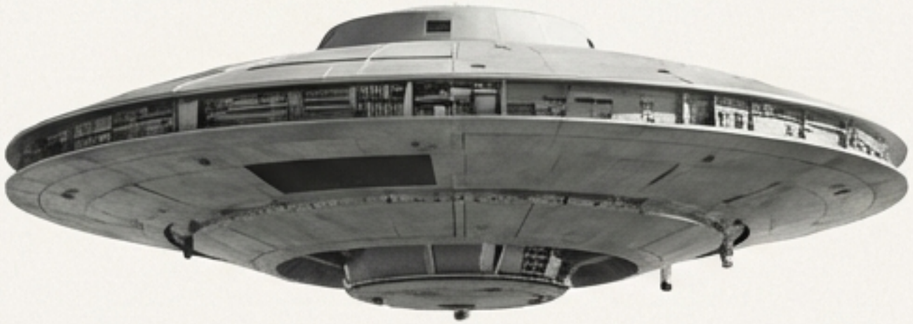
Kremeyer's groundbreaking research received interim funding through a Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) contract from the Tactical Technology Office (TTO)—whose mission is to develop "high-risk, high-payoff" military systems. Subcontract work was performed at the University of New Mexico Physics Department.

Closing the Loop: The Military Nexus


Disc-shaped vehicles filmed over Kirtland AFB. AFWL Director attends briefing.
1979-80
1987
Prof. Myrabo views 1985 film of a disc-shaped vehicle.
Myrabo publishes ‘novel’ DEAS concept.
1994
1996
Myrabo’s Lightcraft experiments receive sponsorship from the Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL), the successor to AFWL, with major directorates at Kirtland AFB.
Related pulsed-energy research (Kremeyer) is funded by DARPA.
2004

A consistent pattern emerges: unexplained aerial phenomena involving advanced disc-shaped vehicles are followed by high-level, targeted interest and funding from military research agencies.

The Unanswered Question



A vehicle was filmed in 1985 demonstrating a propulsion technology so advanced that its core principles were only conceived as a 'revolutionary breakthrough' by mainstream science nine years later, in 1994.

This discovery was made by the very scientist who had spent days studying the 1985 film.

The Provenance of a Revolution

1985:
The Observation

1987:
The Insight

1994:
The Breakthrough

The scientific record shows a clear chronological path. The origin of this technological leap does not trace back to a laboratory, but to a film.